



# Tourism E-news

Tennessee Department of Tourism



E-News V04.4/5

## Joint House and Senate Resolution Recognizes Importance of Tourism

In honor of National Tourism Week, the Tennessee Legislature recently passed a House Joint Resolution recognizing the importance of the \$10.3 billion tourism industry in the state.

Legislators, by passing House Joint Resolution 1269, cast the ceremonial spotlight on tourism, the state's second largest non-agricultural employer.

"The fact that this legislative body has taken the time to formally enter its support of tourism (into the legislative record) is proof positive of the financial, social and cultural importance of our industry," Commissioner Susan Whitaker said.

"Our state, with its legendary musical heritage and literal stage venues, as well

as scenic vistas, spectacular natural beauty, and family vacation destinations, has much to offer both visitors to the state and the state's citizenry. We want to see more people visiting Tennessee for their vacations as well as a weekend get-away."

During the legislative act, Commissioner Whitaker was introduced by Rep. Joe McCord, (R) Blount County. The House members saluted the Commissioner with an enthusiastic, welcoming applause and numerous handshakes down the aisle.

Earlier in the month, Governor Phil Bredesen signed an official proclamation recognizing the tourism industry as one of critical importance within the state. ■



▲ Commissioner Whitaker addresses the Tennessee House of Representatives regarding National Tourism Week.

## Advertising Campaign Rolls Out Isaac Hayes Spots Following Dolly Parton Debut

"Just go out and play, baby...on this stage, it's all good," says native Tennessean, entertainer and musician and human rights activist, Isaac Hayes, in the department's new advertising campaign, "Tennessee, the stage is set for you."



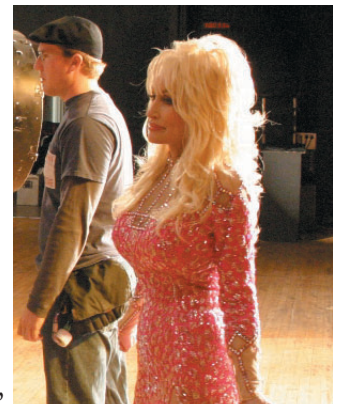
Isaac Hayes

The Hayes spot was shot at the Stax Museum in Memphis, former home of Stax Records where his early career developed when the label was second only to Motown. Currently, Hayes nightly radio show on 103.5 FM WRBO Soul Classics is rated #1 in Memphis.

It is the second commercial released to promote Tennessee

as center stage for visitors to explore our music, outdoor adventure, family fun, heritage and scenic beauty. The department's first commercial included legendary entertainer, and native Tennessean, Dolly Parton.

Each television spot in the campaign is airing in the Tennessee, Atlanta, Birmingham, Greenville-Spartanburg-Asheville, Little Rock, Louisville and St. Louis markets. The spots can be viewed at the department's website at [www.TNvacation.com/video/](http://www.TNvacation.com/video/). ■



Dolly Parton

# News Bureau Online!

Visit [www.tenntravelnews.com](http://www.tenntravelnews.com) and you'll find the department's state-of-the-art, technology-driven News Bureau which is providing local and international media with the resources for dynamic stories about Tennessee.

"This is an important initiative for the department and represents a non-traditional, innovative approach to promoting the state through tourism-related news," said Commissioner Susan Whitaker.

Materials for the website are supported by industry members who submit story ideas, photography and releases to the Department's News Bureau by signing on to the "Partners" section of [www.tenntravelnews.com](http://www.tenntravelnews.com). After completing a simple registration, industry members can submit items as often as they'd like.

In the first 20 days, the bureau received 72 news release submissions from tourism industry partners from across the state. Cities range from Etowah, Chattanooga, Bristol, Memphis, Rutherford County, Collierville, Lebanon, Cleveland, Jackson, Portland, Mt. Juliet, Tullahoma, Camden, Nashville, Pigeon Forge, Crossville, Centerville, Oak Ridge, Lenoir City, Morristown, Columbia, and others. These releases have been organized by event date for distribution during the coming weeks. The Bureau has even received releases for events several months in advance.

In conjunction with these efforts, the bureau distributed 26 news releases, either locally or nationally, in the first 20 days of operation. These releases pertained to the special promotion of local and regional events, attractions or destinations.

The bureau has also dedicated time and energy to pitching specific, tailored stories to the national media. So far, those efforts have produced positive response and interest from *USA Today*, *NPR*, *Teen People*, and *Teen Newsweek* on a range of stories from turkey and deer hunting in Tennessee to a Southern Girls Rock and Roll Camp/Pop Music Growth to Mason: A Small Town with World Class Eateries. We have submitted 10 national stories to media in the first two weeks, with an additional 8-10 scheduled before June.

The department has received considerable industry feedback, too.

Here are some of the reviews:



"The News Bureau concept allows attractions such as the National Civil Rights Museum to get vital information disseminated, practically guaranteeing national and international coverage that we couldn't consistently achieve before." **Gwen Harmon, Marketing/PR Director - National Civil Rights Museum, Memphis**

"This is incredible to me because it's been a hard struggle to move forward as a small county even though we're



▲ Commissioner Whitaker with Regena Bearden, vice-president of marketing for the Memphis CVB and Pat Vescovo, director of catering and rental for the Memphis Botanic Garden during a recent regional News Bureau/industry meeting.

surrounded by a lot of people. The News Bureau will be a great help to us out here." **Joyce Sewell, President - Grainger County Chamber of Commerce, Rutledge**

"When we get the news out about our region, the economic impact rolls over and is felt in all counties. This is a great way to get it out in front of travelers, and our local residents, as well." **Sheree Taylor, Executive Director - South Central Tennessee Tourism Association, Pulaski**

"The Memphis tourism bureau believes in the combined power of media coverage and paid advertising (one doesn't work without the other) to back it up. The addition of the News Bureau will benefit everyone who takes advantage of it." **Regena Bearden, Vice President Marketing - Memphis Convention and Visitors Bureau** ■



## Field Reports from Our Marketing and PR Managers

### Middle Tennessee/Derrick Smith

When not at trade shows and seminars, all three regional marketing managers have been knocking on doors of the Tennessee media and getting to know our local travel editors, DJs and news directors. Increasing their awareness of our great attractions and events, and airing our department's radio and TV announcements will certainly impact in-state and out-of-state travel. Tennesseans know we have a lot to offer, and we are encouraging them to discover great scenic places and value-packed events and destinations within a 50-mile radius of their homes. This is just one of the many things we are doing to increase visitation and bring attention to one of Tennessee's biggest industries.



▲Derrick Smith presents *The Honorable Mablean Ephriam*, (a.k.a., the Judge from TV's *Divorce Court*) with a gift. Judge Ephriam was in Nashville for the *Student Development Symposium Series at Tennessee State University*, an historic institution that has touched the lives of thousands, including celebrity Oprah Winfrey, the late three-time Olympic champion Wilma Rudolph and gospel entertainer Bobby Jones.

### West Tennessee/Ramay Winchester

Ramay represents the department in the agri-tourism initiative in partnership with the Tennessee Department of Agriculture. She played an integral role in the regional educational workshops which

attracted more than 600 attendees who were interested in building tourism during their off season. Workshop topics included:

- Farm Safety for Farm Visitors
- Farm Liability
- Creating a Partnership with Your Insurance Company
- Tourist Oriented Directional Signs & Promotional Signs
- Identifying Your Target Market & Advertising and Promotional Strategies
- Putting Local Resources to Work for You with Regional Tourism Directors

You may call for more information about the agri-tourism Initiative at (731) 426-0888 or email [Ramay.Winchester@state.tn.us](mailto:Ramay.Winchester@state.tn.us).

### East Tennessee/Nicky Reynolds

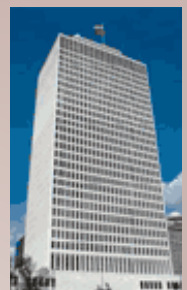
Nicky recently hosted three Japanese journalists from *Shinkin Card Hareyohou* (VISA card member magazine, circulation 300,000) who are producing two articles on the Travel South USA region. The publication visited New Orleans, Memphis, Nashville, Knoxville, the Great Smoky Mountains and Chattanooga (Nicky accompanied the group in the last three locations). Their trip will be highlighted in the November 2004 edition with two 20-page stories: one on the deep South's influence on American music and the other on the roots of American Indians and nature in the Great Smoky Mountains.

Our industry continues to grow, and it's a pleasure to report a new exhibit at the Creative Discovery Museum in Chattanooga, RiverPlay. This is a \$2-million dollar expansion where kids can pilot a riverboat, build a sailboat and play in a myriad of water wheels,

buckets and waterfalls. Our salute to the museum, named one of the 13 best children's museum's in the U.S. by Child magazine.

Please note, according to Knoxville Zoo officials, Kid's Cove continues to develop and will have a "soft opening" in August, 2004. A grand opening and media blitz is slated for 2005 in advance of next year's summer travel season.■

## Department Has New Location After 18 Years!



Snodgrass/  
Tennessee  
Tower

The department's central office moved, after 18 years in the Rachel Jackson Building, to the 25th floor of the William Snodgrass/Tennessee Tower in Nashville. The move improved facility space and provides more enhancement of technology for the staff.

The new address is:

Tennessee Department of  
Tourist Development  
William Snodgrass/  
Tennessee Tower  
25th Floor, 312 8th  
Ave., N.  
Nashville, TN 37243

The department's main phone line remains (615) 741-2159; the toll-free line for travel literature remains 1-800-GO2-TENN (462-8366).■

## Two Marketing Experts Join the Department



Phyllis Qualls-Brooks

Phyllis Qualls-Brooks and Shannon Meldon-Corney are the newest members of the department, bringing a wealth of experience to their positions.

Phyllis serves as the Assistant Commissioner of Marketing, and oversees the work of the marketing, sales and communications divisions. She has more than 30 years of experience in communications and broadcast industries, and was formerly the Public Relations Director of Tennessee State University (TSU) for more than 12 years. You may reach Phyllis at (615) 741-9057 or via email at [Phyllis.Qualls-Brooks@state.tn.us](mailto:Phyllis.Qualls-Brooks@state.tn.us).

Shannon Meldon-Corney serves as the department's Marketing Director and coordinates marketing promotions and advertising buys. She has a decade of experience in public service and public relations. Her tourism background includes Director of Marketing for the Kentucky Tourism Council.

Shannon comes to the department from the Tennessee Education Lottery Corporation where she served as Special Events Manager. Shannon's phone number is (615) 741-2288. Her email is [Shannon.Corney@state.tn.us](mailto:Shannon.Corney@state.tn.us). ■



Shannon Meldon-Corney

## Domestic Sales Report/Lee Curtis

The department participates in a number of travel and trade shows throughout the year.

Commissioner Whitaker and Director of Sales Lee Curtis met with Tom O'Brian, President of AAA Auto Club South, to explore advertising and web link opportunities. Through AAA's *Going Places* magazine, articles and advertisements reach 3.6 million auto club members. Discussions led to a two-page spread editorial, continued networking with the department on story leads and a plan to create a link between the department's vacation planning website and AAA's magazine website.

Plans are in the works to redevelop the "Tennessee Sampler." Lee would like to hear suggestions and input from the industry. Also, if you think you have not received sales leads from ABA, NTA and Showcase via e-mail, please advise our sales assistant, Ruth White at (615) 741-2530 or at [Ruth.White@state.tn.us](mailto:Ruth.White@state.tn.us) to be added to the e-mail sales list.

It is also helpful to receive updated or new two and three-day tour itineraries, by e-mail, from CVBs and tourism organizations. These tours serve as quick references for online and phone inquiries. Please remember to update the sales and communications divisions about any new attractions, tours or events desirable for group and international visitors. ■



## Tennessee's Key Image Strengths Discovered

Tennessee has significant "hot buttons" that motivate travelers to choose our state for their vacations or weekend getaways. Specifically, research commissioned by the department reveals key image strengths that motivate travelers to choose Tennessee over nearby collar states:

- Rich musical heritage
- Beautiful and unique scenery
- Exciting entertainment, festivals and nightlife
- Must-see destinations for the entire family
- Landmarks and entertainment venues
- Outdoor recreation (hunting, fishing and white-water rafting)
- Climate
- Affordability

These attributes were found by Longwoods International, a leading advertising research firm based in Toronto, Canada. Longwoods surveyed adult members of 2,300 households in 16 states of what they thought of Tennessee. Results of the study were used to develop the department's current advertising campaign "Tennessee. The stage is set for you!" ■

◀The department and industry partners sponsored the Travel South closing night dinner in Mobile, Alabama this spring. The colorful entrance to the dinner was created for the Memphis CVB by the Event Company. Dinner sponsor representatives, pictured left to right are: Shirley Davis Conner, Graceland; Kevin Brewer, Vice-President of Sales, Memphis CVB; Lee Curtis, Director of Sales, Tennessee Tourism; Entertainer Andy Childs; Susan Elliott, National Tour Manager, Memphis CVB.

Other dinner industry sponsors included the Gaylord Opryland Attractions (Ryman Auditorium, General Jackson Showboat, Wild Horse Saloon and Grand Ole Opry); the Chattanooga CVB; Pigeon Forge Department of Tourism; Circle Nashville (Williamson, Sumner, Rutherford and Montgomery counties); and CoachQuote of East Tennessee.

## International Sales Reports

### Great Britain/Lofthouse/David Nicholson

The Deep South USA's UK Sales & Training Mission is planned for the week of June 14th. Beginning in London, tour operators will travel to Bristol, Leeds and Manchester to make sales calls, building on last year's successful mission.

### Germany/Wolfgang Streitböerger

A partnership with North Carolina brought a Lufthansa Airline press trip into East Tennessee last month. Thirteen journalists, aboard Lufthansa's new connection from Munich to Charlotte, explored the southeast region, including the nature and beauty of the Great Smoky Mountains, the roots of bluegrass and the foods and culture of Appalachia. Additional partners, along with the department, included US Airways, the Knoxville CVB and the Pigeon Forge Department of Tourism.

The group enjoyed a hike through the Great Smoky Mountains National Park with cooperative weather. Wolfgang reports the group enjoyed Pigeon Forge's outlet and "also loved Dixie Stampede, because they recognized it as uniquely American, which is what European travel writers find interesting about Tennessee."

Wolfgang continues to place editorial copy in the major travel magazines and newspapers in Germany, Austria and Switzerland, reaching a total circulation of 1,660,300 with stories such as the 50 Years of Rock 'n' Roll in Memphis. Wolfgang reports also seeing increased interest in Tennessee travel in general and in Nashville and Lynchburg, specifically. ■

## REMINDER: Update Your Web Info & Events Online

Now, it only takes a moment for members of the tourism industry to update and modify their listings and events on

[www.TNvacation.com](http://www.TNvacation.com)

thanks to a new administrative feature. Each update is funneled through the Department for approval before posting; however, this mechanism makes revising current listings simple and seamless for you. Here's how...

### For Listings Updates:

Simply scroll to the bottom of any page on [www.TNvacation.com](http://www.TNvacation.com) and



click on the "Update Your Information" hyperlink. You will be prompted for your listing name and passcode. If you cannot remember either, a special link (Forgot User Name or Passcode?) will assist you.

Once you've entered the revision fields, you can change information for contacts, rates, general listings, and any other content that appears on the website for your property or properties.

### For Events Updates:

Click on the "Things to See and Do" off the home page, and choose "Festivals and Events" from the left-hand navigation options. Next, click the "Submit or Update Your Event" link. This is where you can modify your listing information, including event name, dates for the new year, and enter an unlimited description of the event. ■



**GET THE GUIDE!**  
The Tennessee Vacation Guide  
at 800-GO2-TENN or online at  
[www.TNvacation.com](http://www.TNvacation.com)